

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~striketrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

1. (currently amended) A profit sharing method used for designing a product having a plurality of elements modifiable to adapt to fashion trends, the method being executed by a server computer and comprising:

providing participants with a questionnaire including a plurality of questions, each question concerning an element of the product, asking each participant to select one option from a plurality of options for the element of the product in each question;

retrieving answers to the questionnaire including pieces of answer information each specifying the one option for each question selected by a participant from the plurality of options corresponding to the element in each question;

specifying one adopted option from the plurality of options of each question of the questionnaire corresponding to the element, based on the retrieved pieces of answer information;

determining a final design of the product in which each element is as specified in the corresponding one adopted option, the one adopted option being determined independently of any other adopted option;

assigning predetermined points corresponding to a weight value of the element for each question to each participant ~~for each question if the participant who has~~ selected the corresponding one adopted option from the plurality of options of the question; and

determining an individual return value which should be given to the participant ~~in accordance with~~ proportional to a sum of the predetermined points assigned to the participant relative to a total number of points assigned to the participants, from a sales achievement of the product made according to the final design, the sales achievement being tallied up between a start of selling date and a predetermined date;

~~wherein the one adopted option is specified independently of a result of a specification of any other element;~~

~~wherein, for each respective element, all of the participants who have selected the~~

~~adopted option on the questionnaire are specified and respectively given points corresponding to a weight value which is predetermined for the element;~~

~~wherein an amount of an incentive to be distributed to the participants is extracted from a sales profit of the final design of the product; and~~

~~wherein the incentive to be distributed to each participant is proportional to a sum of the points given to the respective participant relative to a total number of points given to the participants.~~

2. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein in the specifying of the adopted option, the one adopted option is determined as being an option selected by most participants.

3. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein each piece of answer information specifies, as to a plurality of elements, options which characterize the product, respectively.

4. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein in the determining of the individual return value, the individual return value is obtained by multiplying the predetermined points assigned to the participant by a unit return value calculated by dividing a total return value equivalent to an amount of money that should be returned to the participants by a total of the points assigned to the respective participants.

5. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising transmitting a piece of selection information indicating the one adopted option corresponding to the element of a question of the questionnaire to a client computer of the participant that is connected to said server computer.

6. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising creating image data of the product characterized by at least one adopted option.

7. (previously presented) A profit sharing method executed by a client computer connectable to a server computer, the method comprising:
receiving a questionnaire including a plurality of questions, each question being directed to an element characterizing a commercial article;

obtaining pieces of answer information each specifying at least one option selected by a participant from options corresponding to each question; and

sending the obtained pieces of answer information to the server computer to determine said server computer to execute:

specifying one adopted option corresponding to the element, based on the pieces of answer information received from the client computer, the one adopted option being determined independently of any other adopted option and determining a final design of the commercial article according to the one adopted option for each of the plurality of questions of the questionnaire,

assigning predetermined points corresponding to a weight value of the element to ~~a each~~ participant who selected said one adopted option as the at least one option, and

determining individual return values that should be respectively given to participants in accordance with the predetermined points assigned to the participants, each participant receiving the individual proportional value proportional to a sum of the predetermined points assigned to the respective participant relative to a total number of points given to the participants, from a sales achievement of the product made according to the final design, the sales achievement being tallied up between a start of selling date and a predetermined date;

~~wherein the one adopted option is specified independently of a result of a specification of any other element;~~

~~wherein, for each respective element, all of the participants who have selected the adopted option on the questionnaire are specified and respectively given points corresponding to a weight value which is predetermined for the element;~~

~~wherein an amount of an incentive to be distributed to the participants is extracted from a sales profit of the final design of the product; and~~

~~wherein the incentive to be distributed to each participant is proportional to a sum of the points given to the respective participant relative to a total number of points given to the participants.~~

8. (previously presented) A computer readable medium containing a profit sharing program comprising:

a module making a server computer to issue a questionnaire including a plurality of questions, each question being directed to an element characterizing a commercial article, and having a plurality of options as possible answers to the question;

a module making the server computer to acquire pieces of answer information, each piece of information specifying at least an option selected for a question by a participant;

a module making the server computer to select for each question one adopted option corresponding to the element, based on the acquired pieces of answer information, the one adopted option being specified independently any other adopted option, and to determine a final design of the commercial article according to the adopted option for each element;

a module making the server computer to assign for each question predetermined points corresponding to a weight value of the element for each question to a each participant who selected the adopted option; and

a module making the server computer to determine individual return values that should be respectively given to participants from a sales achievement of the product made according to the final design, the sales achievement being tallied up between a start of selling date and a predetermined date, in accordance with the predetermined points assigned to the participants the individual return value given to a participant being proportional to a sum of the points of the respective participant relative to a total number of points given to the participants;

~~wherein the one adopted option is specified independently of a result of a specification of any other element;~~

~~wherein, for each respective element, all of the participants who have selected the adopted option on the questionnaire are specified and respectively given points corresponding to a weight value which is predetermined for the element;~~

~~wherein an amount of an incentive to be distributed to the participants is extracted from a sales profit of the final design of the product; and~~

~~wherein the incentive to be distributed to each participant is proportional to a sum of the points given to the respective participant relative to a total number of points given to the participants.~~

9-12. (cancelled).

13. (new) A profit sharing method for determining a design of a product having a plurality of elements, based on preferred embodiments of each element of the product input by participants using multiple choice questions via to network connected terminals, comprising:

determining a final design of the product in which each element is executed according to an embodiment selected by most participants; and

manufacturing the product according to the final design and rewarding each participant

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from a sales achievement of the product made according to the final design, proportionally to a sum of predetermined points received by each participant if the participant's preferred embodiment for the element is the embodiment selected by most participants for the element, wherein the sales achievement is tallied up between a start of selling date and a predetermined date.